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## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Democracy and Reaction.* By L. T. HOBHOUSE. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905. 8vo, pp. vii+244.

The economic interest in this treatise upon the working of popular government in England during the last half-century is in the author's mind a secondary one. He is concerned primarily with British political issues, and more specifically with the course of British imperialism since the days of Cobden and Bright. No discussion of current political issues in England, however, is devoid of economic significance. In domestic affairs the widespread movement for municipal trading, and for municipal housing of the working classes, is of great economic consequence; so also is the increasing influence in Parliament of the Socialists and of the Labor Party. The attack upon England's trade policy under the leadership of Mr. Chamberlain has brought another economic issue into politics, while the growth of imperialism itself may be regarded as a phase of industrialism—whether trade follows the flag, or the flag follows trade.

A serious charge is brought home to British imperialism by our author—no less than the betrayal of the cause of popular government, and the debasement of the honest ideals in accordance with which democracy has been instituted as a social reform. Imperialism, it is contended, has developed a spirit of materialistic, bourgeois militarism, which recognizes no other law governing the conduct of nations than the rule of blood and iron. The broad humanitarianism of the older generation of English Liberals has been abandoned by a "generation bent on national progress and impatient of moral restraint."

The simple, unsophisticated English voter, who had been taught in the school of Cobden to regard imperialism as a "free informal union of the colonies, combined with a conscientious but tolerant government of the tropical dependencies," has been slow to realize that imperialism has developed a character quite inconsistent with the fundamental principles of democracy. Imperialism has professed to seek peace, and has in practice instigated wars; it has

professed to have at heart the welfare of mankind, the liberation and enlightenment of the enslaved, and it has achieved the degradation and subjection of self-governing communities. The career of imperialism in South Africa is cited in evidence of its true character at the present time.

Reference to South Africa has been necessary because it is a leading case of the imperialist method, and here the contrast between the promise and the performance extends all along the line. Imperialism was to give us a cheap and easy victory. It gave us nearly three years' war. It was to sweep away the abuses of a corrupt, incompetent, and over-expensive administration. The present administration of the Transvaal is more costly than the former, and more completely in the hands of the capitalists. It was to abolish such scandals of a corrupt oligarchy as the dynamite monopoly. The dynamite monopoly has changed hands, but remains. It was to extend the suffrage to all white men. But at present no white men have the suffrage in either colony. It was to liberate the white population from the yoke under which they were groaning. But, having been liberated, they openly regret the old days. It was to inaugurate an era of unparalleled commercial prosperity. Yet it is the total stagnation of trade and the impending ruin of the country that are pleaded as necessitating the importation of Chinese. It was to protect the Kaffir from the Boer, but we find that the "boys wish to call back the days of the republic." It was to maintain the rights of our Indian fellow-subjects. But our Indian fellow-subjects are now occupied in setting forth "the respects in which the advent of British rule has left the Indian community in a worse position than under the Boer regime."

Again, the test case of America is cited as showing that "the imperialist would incur no risk and sacrifice no shadow of material interest in the disinterested service to humanity." In the face of all this evidence, the conviction has, Mr. Hobhouse believes, begun slowly to formulate itself in the mind of the English voter that the "new imperialism stands, not for a widened and ennobled sense of national responsibility, but for a hard assertion of racial supremacy and material force;" that the new imperialism has nothing in common with the conception of colonial self-government of the older generation of statesmen which is the glory of England's political history—nothing in common with this but the name. The old policy had made for peace, the new

meant perpetual warfare, battles which, where black or yellow men were concerned, became sheer massacres, campaigns which, where a resolute white race stood in the way, involved desolation unspeakable, the destruction of

political and personal freedom, and the erection on their ruins of an un-English type of overpaid and incompetent officialdom, the cold-shouldering of the British immigrant and the recrudescence of servile labor.

The working of imperialism in domestic affairs is declared to have been equally sinister. Imperialism found the country "ripe for social reforms," the achievement of which was conceived to be the fitting occupation of popular government. These reforms have not been undertaken.

The dream of combining a "spirited," that is in reality an aggressive, foreign policy with domestic reform has melted away. The absorption of public attention in foreign affairs paralyzed democratic effort at home. The worst of governments could always retain power by raising the patriotic cry.

Meantime the doctrine of evolution through struggle and survival of the fit has developed a crass materialistic fatalism, in accordance with which the conditions of progress are determined in biology, in complete disregard of the mandates of ethics. The right is the useful, the efficient, the powerful. The ideals of self-government give way to those of domination of the weak by the strong.

Our author, however, retains his faith in the power of popular government to right all this, and sees the signs of change at hand. One may, indeed, note in this connection, the recent vindication, by an overwhelming majority, of England's traditional trade policy, as one point gained against the onward march of militarism, which seems at least temporarily to have failed in its effort to widen the basis of taxation, in order that the burdens of perpetual warfare may be eased a bit.

An interesting portion of Mr. Hobhouse's discussion is that which relates to the programs of the Labor Party and of the Socialists. These programs he does not conceive to be inconsistent with the ideals of government entertained by such leaders as Cobden, Gladstone, and Mill. The problem is conceived to be, as it is in fact generally admitted to be, the preservation of individual liberty, which is more precious than any degree of material gain, in a state of social, one may perhaps say socialistic, co-operation for the common welfare. Cobden championed the cause of individualism against class rule, and generally opposed government interference and labor organization. But the government which he

opposed was not a democratic one. It is felt that neither he nor Mill would necessarily have opposed a positive program of government action where the government is organized on the wide basis of universal suffrage and where therefore class rule does not obtain. It is true that Mill made many concessions which gave evidence that he was in sympathy with the ideals of socialism; but the dominating note in Cobden's philosophy is individualism and freedom. It is difficult for some of us to associate either of these names with municipal trading enterprises.

We cannot speak too highly of this excellent piece of work. In England, perhaps more than in any other country, economic treatises are still written in the full conviction that those who determine the nation's policies are open to the appeal of reason. It was in this spirit that Mill wrote; and, it may be added, the present treatise will not suffer in comparison with the best writing done in England. It is to be hoped that the book will fall generally into the hands of American readers. Imperialism threatens the same blight upon our democratic institutions as it has achieved in England—the same blight as it achieved in China 2,500 years ago.

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*Agricultural Economics.* By HENRY C. TAYLOR, Assistant Professor of Political Economy in the University of Wisconsin. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1905. 8vo, pp. viii+327.

In this book the emphasis seems to be on economics, rather than on agriculture. In the first chapters, on factors of agricultural production and the economic properties of these factors, we find little more than the ordinary statement of the functions of land, labor, and capital in production. The author has the advantage of a thorough, modern training in economics, and has spent much time in first-hand study of agricultural conditions in different countries. With the abundance of economic textbooks and the scarcity of books on agriculture, it is to be regretted that this author could not have placed more emphasis on agriculture and less on the more difficult and theoretical discussion of economic problems, such as the distribution of wealth, and the organization of farm labor.

In the chapter on "Organization of the Farm" the author upholds the modern tendency to specialization and commercial farming against the earlier ideal and condition of independent self-